

USAR_J-13_Kobase

12:00:04:05 Thank you for coming today.

12:00:13:20 First of all, please tell us your name.

12:00:15:00 My name is Teruko Komagaya.

12:00:19:14 Please tell us your date of birth.

12:00:21:06 March 21st, Showa 4th(1929)

12:00:36:11 Where were you raised?

12:00:38:21 I was born in village in Shibuya, Uguisudani. My elementary school was in Kon-no-cho, where you go up the Miyamasu hill.

12:00:57:17 This side of Aoyama street.

12:01:15:10 What did you do for fun when you were in elementary school?

12:01:19:11 I was playing with something that would not cost any. The girls would play jump ropes or rubber ropes. When I was at home, I was playing hopscotch or drawing on a street with pagodite rocks. There wasn't such thing as video games at that time. I played Karuta(cartas or Japanese playing cards) in New Years. We didn't have TV either.

12:01:57:11 Throwing ball...?

12:01:59:05 Yes, boys played catch, but girls played jump ropes and hopscotch and that kind of stuff.

12:02:18:03 How did you learn about Emperor at school?

12:02:21:13 The school separated boys and girls in different classrooms, so we didn't get a chance to play together. The girls played jump ropes and the boys played catch.

12:03:00:06 Emperor..., how did the school teach you about Emperor?

12:03:04:12 What?

12:03:05:10 Emperor

12:03:06:14 Emperor was like a god. Each school had a "ho-anden"(place to store a photo of Emperor and Empress) and we bow each time we pass them everyday.

12:03:24:22 At any kinds of ceremony, the principal took out the photo of Emperor from ho-anden and placed it at an auditorium and we worshipped them. Emperor was very special.

12:04:00:15 Please tell us your story about the time you saw Emperor when the train passed by.

12:04:04:21 Yes, what I remember the most. When a metropolitan street car passed by the Imperial Palace, and people in the car would stand up and worshipped toward the Palace. I remember that the most.

12:04:32:00 When it pass by the Palace?

12:04:34:14 Yes, yes, it did not stop. It was still moving, but people would get up and worship the Imperial palace.

12:04:46:21 When it get close to the Imperial Palace?

12:04:48:19 Yes, yes.

12:05:02:17 How did you think about America before the attack on Pearl Harbor?

12:05:08:10 We didn't talk about it at home, so I don't remember about it well.

12:05:19:18 I've heard the news that Japan entered the war at Hawaii. But I don't have strong impression about the attack itself. I just know what had happened.

12:05:45:17 Only thing I remember is that the Imperial Headquarters announced that they've sunk the enemy ship. They played military march right before the announcement of the Imperial Headquarters. I don't quite remember about the attack.

12:06:24:06 Did you have radio at home?

12:06:26:07 Yes, radio. Radio was the only thing.

12:06:30:14 They played music. At the end they played "Umi yukaba" and that told us that somewhere fought to the last man. Radio was the only thing.

12:06:48:14 Did the radio announced about the attack on Pearl Harbor that same day?

12:06:54:03 Yes,

12:06:55:00 That was like all the other news, nothing so special.

12:07:00:17 There was a place called news movie theater. It was a movie theater that only played news. And I remember watching about the attack at the theater.

12:07:15:07 Was that few days after the attack?

12:07:16:02 What?

12:07:16:18 Did the image about the image come out the day of the attack? Or did it come out few days later?

12:07:21:08 I think so... I was only 6th grade and I wasn't interested about it, and my parents didn't talk about it either because they were too busy, so I don't remember.

12:07:54:03 How did the school changed after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

12:08:02:19 I don't remember about it. I think that topic didn't come up that much.

12:08:13:12 So the attack was in December of Showa 16th(1941) correct? Did the life changed as the time goes by like December, January, February? Did the school life change?

12:08:28:07 The school life didn't change that much. But when I entered Jyo-gakko(girls' school) we started helping the agriculture. We went out to a field and made vegetables. We had to study English but we canceled classes to help agriculture. That event made us realize that we are at a war. But there wasn't big change.

12:09:06:22 Yes, yes, we did study until middle of the 1st grade(Jyogakko 1st grade = 7th grade), then the class started to get cancelled. When I was in 2nd grade(Jyogakko 2nd grade = 8th grade) we no longer had class and went to a field. When I was in 3rd grade(9th grade) we went to a factory in Kamata to work. That was because of the Student Labor Mobilization. We didn't have time to study.

12:09:41:22 Did you study English in 1st grade(7th grade)?

12:09:43:09 Yes I studied English when I was in 1st grade.

12:09:45:10 How did you think about it?

12:09:47:22 I thought I understood them in my own conceit, but it got cancelled eventually.

12:10:03:19 Did you think the English language was interesting?

12:10:07:01 Yes. We had a textbook and I was eager to learn the new language, but the class got cancelled.

12:10:23:15 The class started 1 month after the end of the war. That was when I was in 4th grade(10th grade). I studied hard in the short period of time, but it was only at the beginning of 1st grade and end of the 4th grade.

12:10:51:13 Did you learn anything about America when you were studying English?

12:11:00:22 I was too worried about a test when I was studying English. I studied hard to memorize the text book and I didn't pay attention to anything else.

12:11:39:18 Was there any disaster drill?

12:11:54:11 Yes, there was a disaster drill. My mother attended the one with neighborhood association. My father had bad eye sight so he couldn't attend it. We students were training with bamboo stick. We jabbed bamboo stick in straw figure. It was girls' school but we did stuff like that.

12:12:51:01 You jab a straw figure with a bamboo stick?

12:12:53:13 Yes, we stand the straw figure and jab the bamboo like this. I know it is very primitive, but we were taught that we needed to fight when we ever encountered an enemy. We were all brainwashed so we were all serious about this training.

12:13:20:14 It sounds funny when I think about it now, but we were very serious about it back then. We were brainwashed about Emperor too. We felt sorry from our heart when we heard the Imperial rescript to announce the end of the war.

12:13:51:00 What was the name of the Jyo-gakko(girls' school)?

12:13:54:21 It is Sakuramachi Ko-jyo.

12:14:00:06 Where is it at?

12:14:01:10 It is located near the Sakurashinmachi station along the Den-en toshi line.

12:14:10:22 Mr. Tojyo's residence was in school's neighborhood. It was in a place called Yoga. We had different feeling about that.

12:14:28:18 What grade were you in when you had the bamboo training?

12:14:31:18 I think it was from 3rd grade(9th grade) to 4th grade(10th grade). The factory we went to work got bombed, so we went back to school and had the training between classes. We helped out agriculture at the end of 2nd grade(8th grade). The war ended in August when I was in 4th grade, so we had the training during the war.

12:15:33:01 Did you worry about US army would attack Japan during the war time?

12:15:40:10 We were worried at the beginning. My uncle prepared refuge in rural region and he told us that if something happened, he would take all girls there to evacuate. But it was only at the beginning. The time past and we realized that was a lie. My parents were worried right after the end of the war.

12:16:26:07 I didn't worry about it but my parents were.

12:16:35:21 They worried after the war ended?

12:16:37:21 Yes.

12:16:38:20 Didn't they worry during the war time?

12:16:40:08 We didn't worry during the war because we brainwashed that the Japan would never lose. It was after the war.

12:17:08:19 Please tell us about your experience during the Tokyo air-raid in Shibuya.

12:17:16:02 If you go up this Miyamasu hill, you will see Aoyama street. The air raid happened close to there. It was on May 25th. My family, 5 of us, escaped to Shibuya station.

12:17:35:19 The Shibuya station got filled up with smoke, so we then evacuated to the National Stadium in Yoyogi.

12:17:51:16 We spent a night there and we gathered at Toho Shrine next, and finally went back to home. When we returned, all the houses were gone around our neighbor.

12:18:20:00 You spent a night at Yoyogi. Did you fled from place to place before that?

12:18:25:18 We went down the Miyamasu hill, but the wind was blowing this way so it was hard to go forward. We went down the hill and we sheltered ourselves inside of Shibuya station, where the Toyoko store is right now.

12:18:51:06 Then, everyone hold on to a rope and made a single file line; and we passed the fire station in Shibuya; and we headed toward the military ground in Yoyogi.

12:19:12:17 Everyone meaning your family member of 5 or does it include other people evacuating?

12:19:17:03 Including other people. Everyone was running away in all directions. When we were heading toward Yoyogi, there were so many people who I didn't know, but I couldn't find people from our neighbor. My family members excluding my father because we got separated, headed toward the military ground in Yoyogi. We spent a night there.

12:19:50:14 After that we returned home, but many people from our neighborhood died.

12:20:01:15 Did you escape at night?

12:20:07:20 Yes, I wonder what time was it. I don't remember the time, but when we were at Aoyama street, our neighborhood was surrounded by fire.

12:20:25:13 Did you escape from your house because of the bombing?

12:20:30:10 We were lucky because my mother and I were at front door. If we were inside of the house we didn't know what could have

happened. When we were at front door, the incendiary bomb dropped on the farthest room.

12:20:49:06 And when we were reached Aoyama street, our neighbor was in fire.

12:20:57:13 Were you at the front door with your mother?

12:21:00:23 Yes, I was with my mother, brother, sister, and father, 5 of us together, but when we were heading toward Shibuya station, father got separated. So there were only 4 of us when we got to Yoyogi.

12:21:20:16 No father?

12:21:23:04 That's right. I wrote this in a book, but my father was rescued by fire fighters and brought to the hospital in Itabashi. We didn't know that until we returned home. It was maybe 2 days later.

12:21:54:18 Your father had bad eye sight, didn't he?

12:21:57:18 Yes, he was almost blind. My mother hold on to father's hand and carried my brother. I was holding my sister's hand. My father fell down while we were running toward Shibuya station, then he got rescued by the fire fighters. That's what I heard.

12:22:22:18 We were in panic so I don't remember the details.

12:22:30:18 Did you look around to see other people while you were running away from your house?

12:22:38:14 There were people who headed toward Jingu-gaien from Aoyama, but there was a tornado and several people died from it. Some people from the neighborhood association died from tornado as well.

12:23:01:00 The neighbor thought that our family could not survive, but luckily we did and returned home. The neighbors were very happy to see us again.

12:23:22:02 So you escaped to Shibuya station, correct?

12:23:23:17 We went to Shibuya station from Aoyama street because we were told to go up wind. The wind was coming from Shibuya station, so we went to Shibuya station and we went to the military ground in Yoyogi after that.

12:23:43:00 When we think about Shibuya, it is always crowded near the station.

12:23:47:15 Yes

12:23:49:07 When you evacuated to Shibuya, was it similar to the crowd in modern time?

12:23:55:21 Shibuya has changed a lot.

12:23:58:10 Shibuya station during the attack was not as crowded as the station right now? Didn't it bring chaos?

12:24:07:10 Not chaos... What I remember about Shibuya station is the black market that was held after the war. There wasn't enough food to eat, but I remember potatoes were at the market. I also remember that Shibuya station was jumbled up in any way.

12:24:34:21 About how many people were around the Shibuya station at the time of refuge?

12:24:40:10 I don't remember about how was it like around the station, but we were inside the station. But the smoke came inside the station so each of us hold on to a rope and headed toward the military ground in Yoyogi. I think there were many people.

12:25:11:09 By the fact you needed the rope, was the station infested with people?

12:25:18:01 Yes, we held on to the rope. And people from defense unit and fire fighters squirt water at us to prevent the smoke produced from clothes burnt with ember. Then we reached at the military ground in Yoyogi.

12:26:06:03 How did you feel when you see your house on fire and your father get separated.

12:26:17:22 We couldn't wait for dawn. Fire was in every direction when we were sheltering at the military ground in Yoyogi, so we thought that we would not survive. However we thought that things would work out at daybreak.

12:26:47:03 My mother was worried about my father. Having strapped on mother's back, my brother was very quiet. I think he was sleeping. He was only 3 or 4 years old. My sister held on to me. She could not open her eyes because she had her eyebrow and eye lashes burnt from small pieces of ember. We felt relief when we heard the announcement to gather up to return home.

12:27:32:08 Was your mother holding you father's hand?

12:27:35:18 Yes, my mother was holding on to father's hand, but father fell down. We couldn't go back because so many people are moving in one direction. We left our father there and 4 of us evacuated.

12:27:58:02 How was your mother like when she lost your father?

12:28:01:05 Well, my mother was petite and carrying my brother in her back so she was too busy not to get herself fall. My father was tall guy.

12:28:21:08 Wasn't she calling his name?

12:28:24:16 I think so. I am not sure because I crossed a street with my sister at that moment. I thought my mother was behind me but she wasn't. Later, she caught up with us and told us that she got separated with father but we could only go forward. When we reached Shibuya station, she explained the situation to people from defense unit, but they didn't have time to search for him. After we returned home, we asked our neighbor to look for him but we couldn't find him that day.

12:29:28:08 Then we found out that he was in a hospital. They told us that it was good thing that he couldn't see so stayed in one place when he got lost.

12:29:46:22 Did your father get injured when he fell down? How was his condition later on?

12:30:05:09 I think he was injured, because that was the cause for his death.

12:30;12:04 They couldn't contact us when my father died. Since our neighborhood had all of houses burnt, we were sheltering at a shed which remained unburned. About 20 of us were sheltering there so we didn't have address or other contact method. The hospital could not contact us so we found out about father's death when my mother went to see him in September.

12:31:05:11 So he wasn't alive next time you saw him?

12:31:09:09 I think my mother went to the hospital few times, but we didn't know when he died. We couldn't see father on father's deathbed.

12:31:26:20 All of the students were to keep a culture journal everyday as an assignment, and some of them remained from the war.

12:31:45:05 When did you start keeping the journal?

12:31:50:19 We started it at the beginning of the school, but most of them were lost in fire.

12:32:03:14 This July section... Our house got burnt and I didn't go to school while we were evacuating. I started going there from July 1st.

12:32:21:11 Where did you start going?

12:32:23:22 To school.

12:32:24:10 Oh, School.

12:32:27:18 I evacuated to rural region, Gunma, from May to June, but I couldn't get along well so I returned home. I think I started going to school again on this date because the journal is starting from this date. The rest of the journals were burnt.

12:33:10:17 Please read the passage from your journal on August 15th.

12:33:13:03 Ok, entry on 15th.

12:33:13:14 Go ahead.

12:33:19:21 August 15th, Showa 20th(1945), noon.

12:33:24:04 I think citizen never have cried for an anger like this day.

12:33:33:01 I heard that Emperor himself would make an announcement, and I thought he was going to cheer us up.

12:33:45:07 I never dreamed that this would happen.

12:33:48:18 I couldn't believe the outcome after I heard the announcement from Emperor and the government.

12:33:56:06 Have we ever thought about happiness.

12:34:02:12 No, never. We only had 2 choices; victory or death. How can we accept this outcome right away.

12:34:16:05 But all have came to the end.

12:34:18:17 All the sacrifice from Greater East Asia War□the Second Sino-Japanese War□and the Manchurian Incident came to nothing.

12:34:31:10 How can we apology to people who died for Great Japanese Empire.

12:34:39:09 Moreover, how can we apology to our Emperor.

12:34:46:10 All have came to the end. Japan lost everything. Our responsibility as a citizen is to construct new Japan.

12:34:56:10 From today, no, right at this moment, we are taking a first step to create a new and strong Japan.

12:35:10:02 I think this is my real feeling at that time.

12:35:35:22 When you look back the past, what do you think the attack on Pearl Harbor was all about?

12:35:40:22 I think it was reckless of Japan to attack. They put too much confidence in themselves. But I didn't know that at that time.

12:36:08:10 After I understood all the circumstances, I realized it was reckless thing. But we were brainwashed so we thought that it was the right decision.

12:36:36:19 This would be the last question. How do you think about your experience of the war?

12:36:46:22 I don't know if this is proper way to say, but I think I had a good experience.

12:37:08:23 How so?

12:37:12:10 Because I have a happy life now.

12:37:33:17 Do you have anything else to say?

12:37:42:03 Not really.

12:37:47:23 Thank you very much.